

Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Somalia has no national government and therefore no national policy or programs on child labor or education.⁴⁰¹⁸ Few educational opportunities, either formal or non-formal, are available to students.⁴⁰¹⁹ Since 1996, the international effort to improve education in Somalia has been coordinated by the Education Sectoral Committee of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body, made up of UN agencies, donors, and international NGOs.⁴⁰²⁰ The SACB has emphasized as its major goals improving access to education, improving learning conditions, enhancing teacher training, and creating a financially viable management capacity.⁴⁰²¹ UNICEF, in concert with other partners and local authorities, is working on projects to reform the education system, develop curriculum, train teachers, develop and distribute standardized textbooks, establish educational standards, and develop management information systems.⁴⁰²² UNICEF, UNESCO-PEER, and some NGOs have also distributed sets of textbooks and other instructional materials to a small number of Koranic schools in Somalia and have created a program to try to make Koranic schools supplement or substitute for formal primary education.⁴⁰²³

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, UNICEF estimated that 41.9 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were working in Somalia; it is believed that this percentage has risen.⁴⁰²⁴ Children are engaged in herding, agriculture, and domestic labor.⁴⁰²⁵ Boys as young as 14 or 15 have participated in combat and some children as young as 11 have been forcibly conscripted into militias to serve as combatants and as servants.⁴⁰²⁶ Trafficking in children for forced labor is a serious problem.⁴⁰²⁷

⁴⁰¹⁸ The Transitional National Government, based in Mogadishu, represents Somalia in the UN and other international organizations. It has yet to establish its authority over most of the country and has little control over most government services, which are administered by provincial governments, if at all. See U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Somalia*, October 2003, [cited November 3, 2003]; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm>. See also UN Somalia, *Somalia History*, United Nations, [previously online] [cited October 4, 2002], [cited September 19, 2002] [previously online]; available from <http://www.unsomalia.org/infocenter/history.htm> [hard copy on file].

⁴⁰¹⁹ UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Somalia Donor Update 27 January 2003*, [online] 2003 [cited July 23, 2003]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/0541ED3A1C22572E85256CBD006DE4FA?OpenDocument>.

⁴⁰²⁰ Somalia Aid Coordination Body, *The Somalia Aid Coordination Body on the Net*, [cited December 1, 2003]; available from http://www.sacb.info/main_intro.htm.

⁴⁰²¹ Somalia Aid Coordination Body, *SACB Education Sectoral Strategy*, [cited July 25, 2003]; available from <http://www.sacb.info/committees/education/SACB%20EDUCATION%20SECTORAL%20STRATEGY.doc>.

⁴⁰²² UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Somalia Donor Update 27 January 2003*.

⁴⁰²³ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Somalia*, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000, [cited November 3, 2003]; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/somalia/rapport_2.html.⁴⁰²⁴ Children who are working in some capacity include children who have performed any paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, who have performed more than four hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. See Government of Somalia, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (MICS2)*, UNICEF, [cited November 3, 2003]; available from http://www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/Main.sql?come=Tab_Country_Res.sql&ID_COUNTRY=193&anno=?anno_ See also UNICEF, *Somalia: List of Tables*, [online] [cited November 3, 2003]; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/natMICSrepz/Somalia/TablesFinal150101.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Somalia*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18226.htm>.

⁴⁰²⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, Section 6d. Thousands of children are living in destitution in displaced camps or on the streets, especially in Mogadishu and Hargeisa. See UNDP Somalia Country Office, *Human Development Report 2001 Somalia*, 187 as cited in U.S. Embassy- Nairobi, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 24, 2004. Such children are vulnerable to exploitation including engagement in the worst forms of child labor.

⁴⁰²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, Section 5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Somalia*, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21262.htm>.

⁴⁰²⁷ Children are reportedly sent to countries where they work or collect welfare and send money back to family members in Somalia. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, Sections 6d and 6f. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Somalia*.

Somalia has no government to provide free or compulsory education. A 2000 survey found that 62 percent of schools in Somalia require families to pay fees, averaging USD 15.60 per year for each child.⁴⁰²⁸ In addition, many schools lack textbooks and running water.⁴⁰²⁹ UNICEF estimated in 1999 that 58.4 percent of primary school-age children attended school, and that 72.5 percent of children who had entered first grade actually reached the fifth grade.⁴⁰³⁰ But in 2002, the U.S. embassy reported that only 10 to 20 percent of the school age population attended school.⁴⁰³¹ A 2001/2 survey showed that girls made up only 35 percent of the student population at the primary school level.⁴⁰³² Many students attend Koranic schools, though these schools do not provide broad-based education.⁴⁰³³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Somalia has no national government and has no means for enforcing labor laws.⁴⁰³⁴ Somalia is not a member of the ILO and has therefore not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.⁴⁰³⁵

⁴⁰²⁸ UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Assessment: Somalia*.

⁴⁰²⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, Section 5.

⁴⁰³⁰ UNICEF's MICS2 study looked at children ages five and older in regard to education. According to UNICEF, 77 percent of children in the central-south of Somalia who entered grade one reached grade five as did 74 percent in the northeast and 80 percent in the northwest. See UNICEF, *Somalia: List of Tables*. See also Government of Somalia, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2*. NetAid, an NGO, estimates that "four out of every five children have no access to any schooling whatsoever." See NetAid, *Somalia- Concern*, NetAid.org, [online] [cited November 26, 2003]; available from http://www.netaid.org/projects/project_index.pt?project_id=10231. The U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report also cites the 10-20 percent enrollment figure. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, Section 5.

⁴⁰³¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Somalia*, 598-99 Section 6d. In 2003, UNICEF estimated that school enrollment had increased to 265,000, a 75 percent increase over 1999. See Katy Salmon, *Somalia: Optimism about the future- even if war continues*, Inter Press Service News Agency, February 19, 2003 [cited November 3, 2003]; available from <http://www.warmafrika.com/index/geo/9/cat/1/a/a/artid/191>.

⁴⁰³² UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Somalia Donor Update 27 January 2003*.

⁴⁰³³ UK Save the Children, *Emergency Updates-Somalia*, [previously online] 2002 [cited September 12, 2002]; available from http://savethechildren.org.uk/emergency_updates/Somalia.html. [hard copy on file]. Two studies conducted by UNICEF in the late 1990s found that 59 percent of the children in the North West zones and 39 percent of the children in the North East zone attended Koranic school for two to two and one-half hours per day, usually for up to two years, between the ages of 4 and 10. See UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Assessment: Somalia*.

⁴⁰³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Somalia*. See also UN Somalia, *Somalia History*.

⁴⁰³⁵ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.